



Evaluation and Accomplishments



Step Ahead Accomplishments at the Local Level

Since the planning process is not a clearly defined program area, it is sometimes difficult to point to many tangible (direct and measurable) outcomes. However, a successful planning process sets the stage for the formation and ultimate implementation of many vital human services programs. Thus the process does lend itself, by its very nature, to more intangible (indirect and identifiable) outcomes. Step Ahead, through the Office of Community Planning, continues to be a successful local human services planning body located in all of Indiana's ninety-two (92) counties.

Local Step Ahead Councils have served as locally-driven vehicles for mobilizing people around social service issues facing many of our children and families. The Step Ahead Councils focus on human services planning in six (6) broad categories.

1. Basic Health Needs
2. Community Mobilization
3. Council Development
4. Economic and Educational Needs
5. Educare Services
6. Family Support Services

The following are a few examples of the tangible and intangible outcomes of the local Step Ahead planning process:

- During FY 98-99, over 3,500 citizens from across the state were involved in the local Step Ahead planning process. These same Indiana residents dedicated 128,083 hours of volunteer time for meetings and other various Step Ahead Council activities.
- During FY 98-99, Step Ahead Councils were able to leverage and/or mobilize \$5,017,540.22 in funds/resources. This figure is over double the annual grant allocation amount (\$2,327,191) the Step Ahead Councils received for their planning and discretionary activities from the Family & Social Services Administration.
- 41 Step Ahead Councils have merged with the First Steps Councils (children with special needs from birth to three years old).
- Eleven (11) Step Ahead Councils have merged with Local Planning Councils (Welfare to Work).
- The Adams County Step Ahead Council started the first licensed childcare center in Adams County (North end of the county) at the Boys' and Girls' Club in Decatur.
- The Allen County Step Ahead Council implemented a teen/parent initiative ECHO (Education Creates Hope and Opportunity). This program provides services to teens currently enrolled in school to encourage them to continue their education.
- The Carroll County Step Ahead Council started a Hispanic outreach program in Carroll County.



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- The Cass County Step Ahead Council established the Cass County Community Health Center. The health center offers primary health services for the medically underserved, uninsured and/or underinsured population by providing sliding-fee services, including obstetrics, pediatrics, and adult primary care. The Center's bilingual staff help serve the needs of the growing Hispanic community. The WIC office is also co-located with the Center, next door to the Office of Family and Children. In addition, the Cass County Step Ahead Council published original and updated versions of the Cass County support services Directory for the Family. A Spanish version of this directory was published in 1999.
- The Clark County Step Ahead Council created www.clarkhelp.com and resource kiosk for Clark County families.
- Parent Resource libraries were established in all county schools and the county jail by the Step Ahead Council in Clinton County.
- A facility to house Youth Services, CC Youth Center, CASH, and Blue River ChildCare Center in Crawford County was built with funding obtained from the Indiana Department of Commerce by the Crawford County Step Ahead Council.
- The Delaware Step Ahead Council developed a vision of improved service coordination through use of technology in collaboration with the United Way Technology Project Team from Delaware County. The Council provided modems and browser software to local human service providers.
- The Dubois County Step Ahead Council coordinated countywide annual Family Festivals with interactive activities provided by over 30 agencies/organizations and over 150 volunteers encouraging families to play and learn together and to share information about timely parenting and safety tips for Dubois County families. Additionally, this Council annually provides free developmental screenings for nearly 50 children from birth to five years in Dubois County.
- The Hancock County Step Ahead Council leveraged \$50,000 worth of improvements and training for selected childcare facilities and homes within Hancock County through the Participation in the Child Care Symposium and the Eli Lilly & Company Child Care Initiative.
- An Interagency Housing Development Plan was developed through a collaborative process among multiple agencies and institutions in Harrison County by the Harrison County Step Ahead Council.
- The Jasper County Step Ahead Council established an alternative education program for six school corporations and found funding for the first semester.
- The Transportation Commission secured vehicles and funding for an affordable, assessable and dependable transportation system for Knox County through the efforts of the Knox County Step Ahead Council. The Council developed a community partnership video for Knox County through the Special Populations Commission.
- In LaPorte County, teen pregnancy prevention models were instituted in two school districts in by the LaPorte County Step Ahead Council. The Council also created a prenatal task force, co-sponsored a free dental initiative in the county at both county hospitals and initiated a countywide TB screening and education program.



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- The Madison County Step Ahead Council secured funding through Anderson City Transit to expand para-transit service within the City of Anderson.
- Over 400 participants attended two conferences on child-related issues held by the Marion County Step Ahead Council jointly sponsored by the Marion County Juvenile Court and Marion County OFC.
- The number of reported incidents of child abuse was decreased by the Martin County Step Ahead Council's providing parenting classes for families with children of all ages, including classes focusing on father's responsibilities, divorce, and grandparents raising grandchildren.
- The Monroe County Step Ahead Council developed a Wrap-Around program for children ages 0-18 years of age in Monroe County. The Wrap-Around program coordinates services provided by two (2) or more agencies to "wrap around" these families, educates the community regarding the program and facilitating involvement of relevant organizations and agencies.
- The Montgomery County Step Ahead Council collaborated with the Local Planning Council to develop a grant proposal to create a local 24-hour childcare facility. If funded, the project would include a local match from the Montgomery County Council. The project will provide second and third shift care for both the welfare to work and working poor populations.
- The Noble County Step Ahead Council established a Family Health Care Clinic in a rural health clinic in Ligonier.
- In Ohio County, the Council formed a partnership with the largest employer (1500), the city and the county to establish a childcare resource center. The Council also created a partnership with a local service provider to establish a dental program.
- The Owen County Step Ahead County Council assisted with the planning, fund-raising, meetings with architects, the town council and other interested parties to develop the Owen County Resource Center. The Council and First Steps co-located with Head Start and other services in November 1998.
- The Council in Pike County formed a partnership with the school corporation and vocational cooperative to open an infant-toddler child care center/training lab at the high school to reduce drop-out rates and provide the only child care center in the county.
- Two (2) free dental and medical clinics were developed by the Porter County Step Ahead Council. This council also partnered with the Workforce Development Services and businesses around the Port of Indiana to find solutions to child care issues in the workplace.
- Through local planning and coordination by the Step Ahead Council, Pulaski County received Lilly Endowment funds to build and initiate a Family Y.
- In Rush County, the Step Ahead Council coordinated the co-location of the Community Health Center, the Healthy Families program, the WIC program, the Dunn Mental Health Center and the First Steps/Step Ahead Council.
- The St. Joseph County Step Ahead Council developed a mental health database in collaboration with the Mental Health Association, the Community Resource Center, and the United Way of St. Joseph County. This database will enable individuals to choose an



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appropriate therapist or counselor who meets their specific needs rather than the individual being assigned a therapist by an agency. The Council, in collaboration with the Educare Institute at Indiana University-South Bend, provided \$45,000 in tuition assistance funds that allowed students to obtain early childhood education. Further, the Council, in collaboration with CONNECT, the United Way of St. Joseph County, WDS, and other community entities, developed "Human Service CONNECTIONS", a web-based tool for the coordination of human services, programs and agencies within the community.

- The Council in Scott County developed a human service web site for Scott County (www.scottcounty.org) and created a community help kiosk that is located at the local Wal-Mart. The Council created a one-stop resource center in Scott County for the Step Ahead office, the voucher office, Hoosier Healthwise and other assistance programs.
- A service oriented transportation system for Shelby County was partially funded by the Step Ahead Council. Also, the Council funded, with the support of local businesses, a "resource bank" that meets the unmet needs of families in crisis.
- The Steuben County Step Ahead Council directed funds from a variety of sources toward establishing and sustaining support for healthy Families Northeast Indiana and HOME Program, projects designed to reduce and prevent child abuse in Steuben County. After identifying a need for a education program to help prevent teen pregnancy at the middle school level, the Council developed a coalition of interested individuals, secured funding through grants, local businesses, and fund-raising activities and implemented the program. The Council also collaborated with business and community leaders to establish a Child Care Providers Rescues Cooperative. The cooperative allows providers to purchase supplies in volume in order to keep costs low and help improve the quality of childcare. Further, the Council assists the local schools and the County Office of Family and Children in providing additional services to Spanish speaking students including tutoring, employment and medical assistance to parents and case management for the family.
- Through a partnership/collaboration with the W2W local planning council, the Vanderburgh County Step Ahead Council began a local initiative based assistance program called the GATEKEEPER project. Local funds (\$2,135,255) were dedicated to this project. The project serves clients in four target service areas: 1. Childcare, 2. Transportation, 3. Employment and job training skills enhancement, and 4. Safety net.
- The Council developed a Community Resource Guide in partnership with the local hospital. This guide, which continues to be printed and distributed by the Warrick County Step Ahead Council, is used by all agencies, groups and support programs to assist families in finding the resources they need. This guide is used by all agencies, groups and support programs to assist families in finding the resources they need in Warrick County.
- In Washington County, the Council established a child family interagency collaborative team as a service to families facing multiple difficulties.
- A Boot Camp for New Dads program was started by the Wells County Step Ahead Council in cooperation with all local medical facilities and the United Way of Wells County, Inc. The project was initially funded by the Governor's Restoring Fatherhood campaign, but it is presently funded by the United Way. Two Coaches and a Program Coordinator now carry



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out most operational responsibilities for the program. A partnership with the Center of Nonviolence and the YWCA Shelter for Women Victims of Violence in Allen County allowed the Council to bring needed domestic violence services to Wells County. The Council initiated the task force that examined domestic violence issues in the community and coordinated implementation of the project, including raising start up funds, locating services facilities, and publicizing service availability. The services include counseling for men and support services for women and children, as well as education and awareness activities in the community. Both programs now operate independent of the Council. Additionally, the Council participated in a community-wide 5-year visioning and strategic planning event for Wells County, hosted by the Mayor and President of the Wells County Chamber of Commerce. Breakout groups targeted transportation, economic development, education, social services, land use and development, and others.

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